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President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 48 (*continued*)

Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa (A/56/45)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/371)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.28)

Mr. Rivas (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Colombia appreciates the opportunity to participate in the debate on the implementation of the recommendations that the Secretary-General presented to the Assembly three years ago in his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of development in Africa.

We wish to express our gratitude to the Ambassadors of Spain and Pakistan for guiding so well the activities of the Working Group during the last three months and to the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries for the support it has offered. We also noted with satisfaction the efforts of the Secretariat to make available to the public through the United Nations Internet portal the ample information existing in the Organization on programmes focusing on Africa.

United Nations efforts for Africa in the areas of education, conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building — the object of our examination this year — have produced positive though insufficient results considering the great challenges for peace and development that the continent faces.

That appears to be the main conclusion of the Working Group, and we agree with it. However, we find it discouraging that the attention given to Africa in the various organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations has not functioned in a way that more decisively supports peace and development on the continent.

This year, in addition to the deliberations in the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council dealt with the problems of sustainable development at its ministerial-level segment. The Security Council has also followed closely the performance of various peace missions in the region. Its members visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighbouring countries and had various meetings at the ministerial level in New York with the signatories of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and the Arusha Peace Agreement.

The delegation of Colombia, as a member of the Security Council, has had the satisfaction of contributing to the Council's efforts and has promoted

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greater cooperation with existing regional organizations in Africa. Last August, during our presidency of the Council, we promoted an examination of the regional approach to conflict management in Africa, in response to the findings of the United Nations Inter-Agency Mission to West Africa, headed by Mr. Ibrahima Fall, the Secretary-General's representative. We believe that the views expressed at the meeting on that subject can contribute to the management of conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building in Africa.

Allow me to express some views that are widely shared on the regional approach. First, the regional approach must be seen as a complement to and not a replacement for national or global efforts in conflict management. Secondly, the success of the regional focus depends, inter alia, on the main protagonists being in agreement on the definition of the region and having a positive perception of the role of external actors. Thirdly, the differing perceptions among the regional and external actors, including the Security Council, may limit the effective management of prevention, peacekeeping or peace-building activities. Fourthly, despite the usefulness of regional efforts, respect for the sovereignty of each country must continue to guide the external actors.

That said, my delegation is pleased with the decision adopted by the Secretary-General to establish a United Nations Office in West Africa, with headquarters in Dakar, for an initial period of three years. We consider to be important its objective of promoting a regional strategy for dealing with the problems relating to peace and development, in close cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), with emphasis on conflict prevention and peace-building in countries that are emerging from a conflict.

In this connection, we should welcome the ECOWAS decision taken last July to extend, for a new three-year period, the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa. This is a measure that, if supported by the main arms-exporting countries in the world, could have a favourable impact on peace and development throughout the region. We are aware that there are similar initiatives being undertaken in other regions on the continent, in particular by the countries of the Southern African Development Community and in the Horn of Africa.

It is obvious to my delegation that the African countries themselves should provide orientation for efforts to create a favourable environment for peace and development. This is part of the process of shouldering the responsibility for their own destiny, as all peoples have done once they have freed themselves from colonialism — in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean alike.

We are therefore pleased with the decision adopted by the African countries during the thirty-seventh Summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), held in July in Zambia, to establish the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In addition, we support the appeals for the United Nations to respond more efficiently and in a more coordinated manner to the hopes expressed by the New Partnership and for it to consider the possibility of convening a special session of the General Assembly on options for continued solidarity with and support for the African continent.

We believe that the United Nations is in a very good position to focus the attention of the international community on the needs for peace and development in Africa, and to work on an agreed basis with regional organizations on the continent and assist countries in strengthening their Governments' own management capacity, with the broad participation of African civil society organizations.

My delegation supports the terms of the draft resolution before us this year regarding the implementation of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General to the Assembly in 1998. We feel it is appropriate to suspend the deliberations of the Working Group in order to provide time for next year's assessment of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Our commitment to peace and development in Africa will remain unwavering.

Mr. Mársico (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, we would like to thank Foreign Minister Holkeri of Finland for drafting the report of the Working Group, and the two Vice-Chairmen, the Permanent Representatives of Spain and Pakistan, for their efficient work. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report.

We agree with the basic premise of both reports: that there is a link between peace and development. We believe that that relationship is essential, because there

will not be durable peace in Africa until the minimum conditions for sustainable development exist. Today we would like to emphasize the relationship between conflict prevention and development in Africa. In our view, prevention means more than simply the absence of armed conflict. It is related to a people's possibility of economic, educational and human development.

The prevention of armed conflicts is the primary responsibility of the Security Council. Exercising that responsibility is not an easy task. It requires human and financial resources and political will. When all those elements have existed the Council has been able to act efficiently and to establish, for example, a preventive peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic. When one of those elements was missing — in particular, the political will to act — then genocide occurred in Rwanda.

We also believe that if there had been sufficient political will, the effects of some African conflicts could have been limited through the application of an arms embargo in their initial stages.

In addition to those fundamental elements, we believe that there are specific instruments to aid in preventing conflict. The Security Council must have information on what is happening in the field. Otherwise, early warning systems will not function properly. In the case of Sierra Leone in May 2000, the lack of intelligence brought about a delicate situation for the safety of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone staff.

The Council needs to be closely acquainted with the political, economic, social and ethnic causes of conflicts under its consideration. For that to occur, we believe that close cooperation is required between the Secretariat, the Council and African regional and subregional organizations, through a regular exchange of information and visits at both the technical and political levels. We believe that concrete progress has been made in the past two years. The meetings held in 2001 by the Council with the Lusaka Political Committee on the situation in the Great Lakes region or with the Economic Community of West African States on Sierra Leone signal a trend of positive rapprochement. Security Council missions to the countries affected by conflict have shown themselves to be a useful tool, as demonstrated by the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region last May.

The International Tribunals are another prevention element. They create awareness of the fact that crimes against humanity, such as the genocide in Rwanda or the atrocities committed by the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone, will not go unpunished. In this regard, we note with concern that the tribunal on Sierra Leone cannot be put into operation owing to a lack of funds, despite the pledges made. In that context, we also believe that the entry into force of the Rome Statute, which establishes the International Criminal Court, will be an important deterrent.

Conflict prevention is not the exclusive responsibility of the Security Council. Given the overwhelmingly intra-State nature of African conflicts in the post-cold-war era, the Security Council's work would benefit from greater cooperation with the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. African regional and subregional organizations also play an important role in conflict prevention and resolution. They are not always in a financial or technical position to carry out that responsibility, even when the political will exists. That is why they require the support of the United Nations and the donor community. In this context, we believe that cooperation opportunities within the context of Chapter VIII of the Charter should be further explored and exploited.

We live in a world of contradictions. Integration and globalization coexist with fragmentation and marginalization. The unprecedented economic prosperity of recent years coexists with extreme poverty in some areas of Africa, as well as in other parts of the world. One fifth of mankind is forced to survive on only $1 per day. Despite that, official development assistance has steadily decreased. We believe that it should be increased. We also believe that support should not be limited to official development assistance. It should also be translated into trade liberalization, which would enable greater international participation by the African countries in world trade. Tariff barriers take on new forms, such as the establishment of labour and environmental standards and "anti-dumping" measures, sending a discouraging signal to African countries that are making considerable efforts to modernize their economies and win new export markets.

Argentina has always been present in Africa. Since the beginning, we have supported the

decolonization process of the continent and the struggle against apartheid. In recent years we have strengthened our political relationship and have expanded our cultural and trade relationship.

We have participated in peacekeeping operations in Angola and Mozambique, the electoral monitoring processes in the first free election in South Africa, the legislative elections in Algeria in 1997 and the referendum on self-determination in Eritrea in 1993. We are currently participating in the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, and very recently we sent civilian police to the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Argentina lends humanitarian assistance directly or through the White Helmets and promotes development cooperation through cooperation funds. Likewise, in the framework of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic, which groups three Latin American countries with 21 African countries, and which Argentina has coordinated since 1998, a series of initiatives aimed at expanding cooperation between its members has been proposed.

We hope that this tendency towards dialogue, which is mutually beneficial, will be expanded even more in the future.

Mr. Dos Santos (Mozambique): In addressing the General Assembly on agenda item 48, I wish to commend the positive monitoring work done by the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa.

We welcome the progress report, contained in document A/56/371, on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

The report describes the specific follow-up action that has been initiated in the areas of peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building. It presents a broad view of recent developments in the area of governance and sustainable development, as well as underscores the need for the international community to support the efforts of African countries to develop and sustain their economies.

At the Millennium Summit last year, heads of State and Government resolved,

> "To make the United Nations more effective in maintaining peace and security by giving it the resources and tools it needs for conflict prevention, peaceful resolution of disputes, peacekeeping, post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction." (*A/RES/55/2, para. 9*)

There is a nexus between peace and development. Long-term conflict prevention demands commitment that goes beyond short-term military support. We are encouraged to note that the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa highlights this nexus and advances a comprehensive and integrated approach to conflict prevention, poverty eradication and development. We are hopeful that this approach will help meet the special needs of many African countries.

In the same vein, the prevention of conflicts should aim at addressing their root causes, including poverty, hunger, epidemic diseases and underdevelopment. To this end, the external debt of heavily indebted poor countries must be cancelled, levels of official development assistance and foreign direct investment must be increased and market access to products from developing countries must be allowed.

States and the international community at large should vigorously engage in the promotion of a culture of peace and greater cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts; assistance to reconstruction efforts in post-conflict situations; strengthening efforts to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons by implementing, at all levels, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; as well as in the implementation of the recommendations of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations.

The United Nations must also increase its support for Africa's own peace and development initiatives. African countries have continued their efforts to build African capacity for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts and for development. The first African ministerial conference on security, stability, development in Africa, held at Abuja, Nigeria, in May

2000, proposed a plan of action and implementation for such an endeavour.

At the subregional level, and as a way to tackle the root causes of conflicts, we in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) are committed to efforts to eradicate poverty, to combat HIV/AIDS and to better respond to challenges posed by globalization. In SADC we are also strongly engaged in activities aimed at tackling conflicts in our subregion. The SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, currently chaired by Mozambique, is sparing no effort to promote peace and security through own-grown conflict prevention and resolution initiatives. Other subregions in the continent are undertaking similar initiatives.

We therefore urge the United Nations, the international community as a whole and international financial and economic institutions to support African development initiatives, especially the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The Partnership aims to set an agenda for the renewal of the African continent based on national and regional priorities and development plans prepared through a participatory process. It foresees a new framework of interaction with the rest of the world, including the industrialized countries and multilateral organizations. It builds on the wealth of experience thus far accumulated by Africa and its partners.

African leaders and their peoples are fully conscious of their primary responsibility for promoting peace, stability and development in the continent. What they require is adequate and timely assistance. As stated by our Foreign Minister during the general debate, at the national level the Government of Mozambique has approved a poverty reduction strategy plan for the period 2001 to 2005, whose strategic vision is founded in two imperatives: the need to maintain peace and stability in the country and the need for rapid, sustained and broad-based growth where private initiative plays an important role. Moreover, the Government of Mozambique has launched a national debate on a long-term strategy — Agenda 2025 — which is based on constructive dialogue on the future of Mozambique. The Agenda is aimed at creating, through a participatory and inclusive process, a national strategic vision for development, as well as at strengthening the ability of Government and of civil society to define and implement national policies and projects.

In order to combat HIV/AIDS, the Government of Mozambique has adopted a three-year national strategic plan that focuses on prevention and on reduction of the impact of the disease. The plan places the human being at the centre of its action, and is directed at the vulnerable groups of society, including women, orphaned children and young people, particularly girls. In this end avour the Government has adopted a multisectoral approach with the active involvement of all stakeholders of our society.

These national policies, strategies, plans and programmes represent our modest but determined effort and contribution towards tackling the root causes of conflict and promoting durable peace and sustainable development in Mozambique, in southern Africa and throughout the continent. We wish to avail ourselves of this opportunity to reiterate our appreciation and gratitude to the United Nations and to all cooperating partners for their assistance.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset, on behalf of the Moroccan delegation, to congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on his most useful report (A/56/371) on follow-up measures to implement the recommendations contained in his report (A/52/871) on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. I want also to convey heartfelt congratulations to the members of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on that question, and particularly to its two Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Shamshad Ahmad, Permanent Representative of Pakistan, and Mr. Inocencio Arias, Permanent Representative of Spain, who worked tirelessly to ensure the success of the Group's work.

Obviously, this is not the first statement by the Kingdom of Morocco on this issue. That reflects our very special interest in the question of the causes of conflict in Africa as it relates to development in our continent, and in the need to find a speedy solution to it within the United Nations.

The proliferation of debate, both within and outside the United Nations, on the tragic situation of the African continent and on how to rectify it is an indication of the extent and the gravity of the crisis the continent is enduring. Despite its enormous potential in terms of human and natural resources, Africa continues to be a stricken continent ravaged by increasingly

complex and bloody conflict, which jeopardizes its stability and its economic and social development.

There is thus an interaction between the persistence of conflict and economic stagnation in Africa; that interaction was rightly a focus of the comprehensive recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his 1998 report, which we consider to remain entirely relevant. Morocco attaches great importance to those recommendations; we consider that a comprehensive, integrated approach is needed for their implementation.

Creating a structure within the United Nations system would probably be the best way to foster and implement that approach. Such a structure would aim to ensure the implementation of the recommendations set out in the report of the Secretary-General, along with follow-up and assessment of the progress made by United Nations bodies in that regard.

The study of the causes of conflict already exists; it has been done in various reports that have been submitted either by the Secretary-General or by groups of experts on one conflict or another which the Security Council in particular is dealing with. In this way, in many conflicts, from Sierra Leone to Angola to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we have ascertained the extent to which the exploitation of natural resources in certain areas beyond the control of the central Government is fuelling civil wars and armed confrontations.

In this respect, we feel that the coordination of efforts on the part of the international community within a suitable structure would be really appropriate. And why? First, because until now in Africa, we have become accustomed to reason country by country, conflict by conflict, whereas the transnational groups of traffickers operate on a broad scale, on a continental level, and sometimes on a global level without taking borders into account. Therefore, it is important that all measures be taken, within a framework of international legality, so that the nationals of third countries cannot benefit from the chaos or anarchy that has been created in one African region or another in order to subjugate African populations for purely mercenary purposes.

Together with the measures that address the causes of conflict, be they preventive or therapeutic, we certainly need to strengthen the peacekeeping mechanisms through close cooperation with the African countries concerned. The Kingdom of Morocco considers that the relations being established between the troop-contributing countries and the Security Council members, as well as those supplying logistical support, favour the establishment of an effective partnership in terms of peacekeeping. We are actively participating in the meetings as a troop-contributing country.

Moreover, it is vital that the United Nations adopt concrete measures to guarantee the strictest possible respect on the part of the parties to the conflict for norms of international humanitarian law — norms which, it must be remembered, are peremptory and mandatory for all sides, even going beyond accession to one international convention or another.

Of course, in addition to foreign intervention, among the causes of conflict today are, unfortunately, suppression or all kinds of harassment among ethnic and cultural groups, which seek to gain support through ethnic diversity in neighbouring countries to stir up separatist conflicts.

In the framework of post-conflict peace-building, our country highly commends the setting up of a support structure and encourages the subregional integrated approach, whether it be in West, Central or Southern Africa, by developing cooperation among the global and the subregional organizations concerned, as was done successfully in West Africa.

We welcome the creation of a United Nations office in West Africa, the mandate of which will be to strengthen the United Nations capacity in monitoring, rapid warning and conflict prevention, and which will help in particular to coordinate from the headquarters — which, according to our knowledge, will be in Dakar — all the support for efforts and activities for consolidating peace in the West African subregion. We support this initiative for a United Nations office in Dakar, and we will contribute at the appropriate time to its success in order to allow our brothers from West Africa to recover their stability. This will allow them to devote themselves fully to economic development and fully meet the vital needs of their peoples.

Morocco is convinced that democracy and good governance are the common objectives for all Africans, but these objectives depend on the return to peace and the guarantee of security to the societies concerned. Security is the key to freedom.

My country is also convinced that achieving durable peace and real economic growth in Africa depends not only on the moral and financial commitment of the African Governments, but also on the creation of an environment favourable to investment, to economic growth, to the restructuring of international aid, to the reduction of the debt burden, to the opening of international markets and to the creation of small and medium-sized businesses. Concerted action on the part of the international community and international financial institutions is absolutely vital in order that significant progress be made on all these issues. Of course, we have been mentioning these issues for several years, and we are expecting significant steps to be taken soon.

In conclusion, Morocco, as an African country which faces Europe — when I say faces, that means we see Europe from Tangiers — has historically been at the crossroads of differing cultures and civilizations, including Arab, African and European. Morocco is striving to deepen its relations with the regions to the north and south of the Sahara. To do so, my country is striving to develop all the necessary infrastructure and all appropriate institutions in order to promote and develop exchange between the regions north and south of the Sahara and, going beyond that, between the African continent and Europe. We are convinced that the development of these exchanges is the best means of ensuring peace and of overcoming all artificial opposition here and there that could generate into disastrous conflicts.

Mr. Guani (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The promotion of lasting peace and sustainable development in Africa are of particular importance to Uruguay, especially in the southern and western parts of the continent, given their geographic proximity to countries whose coastline, like Uruguay's, is located on the other side of the South Atlantic. However, that proximity has not been translated into close neighbourly relations, which could make better use of their potential.

While we do have fledgling relations with many African countries, we wish further to strengthen those ties and to make the most of the considerable possibilities for cooperation with our African neighbours. One of the factors that has hindered the development of our relations is the existence of conflicts, which in some cases have a regional impact and whose resolution is, of course, in the hands of our African brothers.

However, we are aware that countries outside the region can contribute greatly to the consolidation of peace in Africa. Uruguay has had a significant presence in the 20-odd peacekeeping operations that this Organization has established so far in Africa, in particular in Angola, Western Sahara, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and, more recently, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We have made that contribution without selfish designs, motivated solely by our nation's deep-seated sense of humanity and solidarity, our long-standing democratic tradition and our unswerving respect for human rights.

There is consensus among the international community that peace, democracy and good governance are prerequisites for achieving sustainable development in Africa and that we need to devise general and integrated strategies to deal with the root causes of conflicts, including their economic and social dimensions.

Let me recall that the Secretary-General, in his report on the implementation of recommendations related to the causes of conflict in Africa, prepared in accordance with resolution 55/217, appeals to the international community to support the work of the African countries in carrying out reforms based on advances in the areas of public management and of sustainable development.

We are pleased that the Open-ended Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa has focused its attention on conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building, as well as on education as a key factor in the achievement of durable peace and sustainable development. This will contribute to averting clashes, which can sometimes go on for years, leaving in their wake a trail of death and societal breakdown.

Poverty in Africa is jeopardizing not only efforts towards peace and development in that continent, but also, and above all, security through the world. Can anyone really believe that, on a planet made ever smaller by technological advances, information and communications, an increasingly rich minority can coexist peacefully with an increasingly poor and marginalized majority? Concerning the fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa, we deem extremely

important the fact that the Secretary-General has personally met with the highest-level officials of six multinational pharmaceutical companies to discuss additional measures they could take in order to make care and treatment more accessible to individuals living with HIV/AIDS. The cost of medication for poor countries ultimately marginalizes even further those who do not have access to treatments that are commonplace in the developed countries.

We hope that the efforts of our African brothers and of the international community will be able to overcome the problems facing this continent. Only then will we be able to focus our attention on political, economic and cultural relations and on cooperation.

I wish to recall here that the Afro-Latin American Institute is based in Montevideo and that we believe it to be the most appropriate forum for revitalizing relations between Latin America and Africa.

Finally, we hope that the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, next March, will devote particular attention to Africa's needs.

Mr. Tekle (Eritrea): Allow me to begin my statement by thanking the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in his report of April 1998 on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. I also wish to avail myself of this opportunity to thank the Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group for the report on this item.

The Eritrean delegation also welcomes the adoption by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit, held in Lusaka from 9 to 11 July 2001, of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

It has not been unusual recently to read, in academic literature on African politics, that Africa is definitely reverting to the conditions described in Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness*. We are informed by highly respected Africanist scholars that, in fact, there is nothing abnormal or extraordinary in such a regression, since it only constitutes a return to the "normalcy of a very long history of conflict and warfare" that was briefly interrupted by a colonial Pax Britannica, or *la paix coloniale*, which were able briefly to control but not totally to eliminate it. We are told that the re-emergence of a Hobbesian state of war as a dominant form of state formation, rather than destruction, is natural, and that the deliberate manufacturing of disorder, confusion and insecurity and the legitimization of crime by African leaders to maximize their control of power is only logical.

In short, they are saying that war is a natural condition of African political economy that we must accept and to which we must become accustomed. We are then told that, since these conditions cannot create a favourable environment for development, they can only perpetuate war and obstruct any possible creation of the legal, administrative and institutional foundations essential for development.

It is quite easy to refute the absurd theoretical assumptions and historical fallacies underlying any such scholarship of doom by the Afro-pessimists. Indeed, while it is true that absolute poverty and deprivation, as well as widespread disease, ignorance, malnutrition and homelessness, have ravaged the continent on a scale which is unacceptable in the twenty-first century, developments over the last decade augur well for Africa, since they demonstrate that, by and large, Africans have rejected the "criminalization of the state" or the "instrumentalization of disorder" in favour of a new development-oriented and participatory state — hence, NEPAD.

Yet all is not well. There is still some cause for concern, if only because of the continued erosion of the State and the proliferation of armed conflict in some parts of the continent. These have been detrimental to more orderly transitions to democratic governance and development.

The legacy of colonialism has, in fact, been the primary source of conflict in the continent. Ethnic conflicts, as well as wars related to territory in some regions of the continent, can be directly linked to the legacy of colonialism. While territorial conflicts have essentially been between States, ethnic conflicts have taken place within States. However, inter-State conflicts have, on occasion, escalated to such a level that they have caused massive intervention by other, usually neighbouring, States. This has resulted in major regional conflicts, involving several countries in Central and West Africa. Furthermore, some States have blatantly violated the territorial integrity of their neighbours — ostensibly because they have felt threatened, but often because they desire to act as

regional policemen. Such intervention, particularly in the Horn of Africa, consisting of a State's involvement in a civil war — either directly, by armed intervention, or indirectly, by actively supporting a faction, as well as hosting, training, arming and financing terrorist insurgents — has been dangerous, primarily because it has provoked counter-intervention. It is also, in the end, self-defeating.

Violations of international law due to irredentism and the blatant intervention by a State or group of States in a third country in support of one faction or its antagonists have been closely linked to cupidity with regard to a territory or its resources — mines, fertile land, ports and so forth — or to presumed special interests in that country. This must be considered unacceptable since, by undermining the standards, principles, values and conventions that have promoted and protected regional and international peace, security and stability, it may lead us to the chaos and disorder that has been prophesied by the scholars of doom and despair.

While it is true that colonialism is a source of our problems, we can no longer legitimately blame it as the sole agent for our problems, if only because these problems could have been solved on the basis of available legal instruments and procedures at the regional and international level. It is for this reason that we must, ourselves, undertake a critical self-analysis. It is the considered view of the Eritrean delegation that the lack of broadly defined human security, good governance and access to and equitable distribution of resources within States, as well as the violation of international law at the international level, are the roots of all our predicaments.

Good governance, which emphasizes not only representative but also participatory democracy, and democracy, which encompasses developmental as well as political aspects, are the sine qua non for the promotion and protection of equality of condition, in addition to equality of opportunity. Only with the materialization of such a democracy, ensuring effective control of the public agenda at the grass-roots level and, thus, a human-centred development programme, can we build a just social order which addresses the material and spiritual needs of our population. In other words, if there is no democratic development, there will be no security, no stability and no peace.

In this connection, it must be noted that, in spite of the end of the cold war, the promotion of democracy and good governance still continues to be a function of the national interests of States; thus, the most democratic of States have often been supportive of the most undemocratic Governments. Also, it seems obvious that, in an interdependent world, the democratization of international relations is as vital as the democratization of national affairs for our mutual benefit and for safeguarding peace, security and stability.

To this end, the rich countries must make an earnest effort, collectively and individually, on the basis of their commitments undertaken at the Millennium Summit, to help Africa to meet the challenges of globalization by turning it into a positive force for development and the reduction of disparities, as well as for the creation of just and equitable economic relationships. They should also address issues related to official development assistance and foreign direct investment; we thank them for the measures they have taken regarding debt relief, in particular the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative.

Needless to say, Africans must also respond by accelerating their economic reform programmes, as well as by ensuring a salubrious environment for stimulating savings, preventing the flight of capital and attracting investment.

Conflict and war have been very costly to Africa. Hundreds of thousands have died because of civil and inter-State or regional wars, which has drastically affected human capital; still others have died of famine, starvation and epidemics directly linked to war. Conflict and war cause displacement and migration. They often result in ecological disaster and drain resources. The massive purchase of armaments and the hiring of foreign mercenaries divert resources much needed for education, health and other social services, as well as from development projects. They destroy normal trade relations and not only cost the international community a great deal in donations but also create a culture of dependency. Moreover, they also make routine governance extremely difficult.

Thus, it behoves us to endorse the suggestions for further action made in the reports of both the Secretary-General and the Open-ended Ad Hoc

Working Group, especially those related to education, conflict resolution and post-conflict peace-building.

Nowadays, the mandates of peacekeeping operations are being broadened to meet new problems and challenges. Thus, in addition to coping with the traditional functions of preventing conflict, peacekeeping operations must now address challenges spawned by post-conflict situations such as, inter alia, nation-building, the protection of human rights, respect for international humanitarian law, the resettlement of displaced persons, demining and the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants.

For this reason, the Eritrean delegation endorses the recommendations of the Secretary-General concerning preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment and preventive disarmament in peacekeeping. The implementation of the recommendations by all can prevent the start or escalation of conflict and avert the loss of life and destruction of property.

The Eritrean delegation also believes that there is a need for a paradigm shift from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. In this connection, the need for an early warning system becomes obvious. On the other hand, it would be an admission of humanity's collective inability to solve its problems if peacekeeping operations were to be regarded as a permanent feature of international relations. They are not — and must not be — an end in themselves.

Once conflicts take place, it becomes essential for the international community to take urgent measures to manage them through subregional or regional organizations and, inevitably, the United Nations. It is not right that conflicts should deteriorate to the extent that they cause unnecessary destruction of lives and property, when the United Nations, in particular, is able to take effective action through its conflict resolution mechanisms and procedures. However, we must also realize that international and regional organizations can help only those who help themselves.

The Eritrean delegation readily acknowledges the role that regional organizations can play in peacekeeping operations when they establish a cooperative relationship with the United Nations. On the other hand, this does not and cannot mean that regional organizations can ever substitute for, rather than cooperate with, the United Nations. Nor can the United Nations, whose Security Council is mandated with the maintenance of international peace and security, justifiably shirk its responsibility by passing that responsibility off to regional organizations. Any such attempt will not only be in violation of the Charter of the United Nations but also undermine confidence in the United Nations. This is applicable to Africa and the OAU, as it is to other regions and regional organizations.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation considers the strengthening of peace, security and stability in Africa to be a vital component of efforts to establish a balanced and predictable world order through the creation of an integrated and stable system of international security based on the Charter of the United Nations.

In spite of the important progress achieved in the past year, we continue to be concerned about the ongoing tension in Africa. In a number of countries, armed conflicts persist that frequently cross borders and destabilize entire regions. We share the view of the Secretary-General that a link exists between peace and development. Russia favours a comprehensive approach to settlement and prevention of conflicts, eradication of poverty, the promotion of development and the strengthening of democracy on the African continent. We are convinced that if we do not break the vicious circle of insufficient development, social and inter-ethnic problems and political and military instability, conflicts and failing development programmes, the countries of Africa will not be able to embark on the path of sustainable and dynamic development or be fully integrated into the world economy.

We welcome the increased efforts on the part of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the subregional organizations in Africa to prevent and settle conflict situations, showing the readiness and determination of Africans to play an appropriate and key role in the solutions to these problems. We commend the efforts of the OAU in promoting sustainable development, encouraging the States on the African continent to embrace economic and political change and strengthening regional and subregional integration.

The OAU summit in Lusaka was an important step forward for the integration processes in Africa, and the decision to begin forming an African Union

structure is giving new impetus to multi-level regional cooperation. We consider the New African Initiative adopted at the summit a strategic programme that will move Africa forward towards progress and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Russia agrees with many of the approaches outlined in the report, in particular with respect to the risks of globalization and the negative impact of conflicts on the implementation of development programmes. We support the argument that global partnership should be based on mutual interests and the main responsibility for conflict settlement and development of the continent lies with the African Governments themselves. At the last Group of Eight Summit, Russia supported the Genoa plan for Africa aimed at working out concrete proposals with regard to the implementation of key provisions of the New African Initiative.

At the same time, efforts along these lines on the part of African countries should be supported by the authority and capacities of the United Nations. We are pleased to note the increased cooperation of the United Nations with the OAU and with such subregional organizations as the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

This cooperation allows us to focus international efforts on solving the most urgent problems and coordinating peaceful initiatives, which in a number of cases have already made an important contribution to the settlement of conflicts. Russia supports the efforts being carried out by the United Nations to strengthen the peace-building potential of Africa through staff training, exchange of information, joint study and demining programmes and also, within the context of the United Nations Standby Arrangements System, the establishment of an effective cooperative peacekeeping partnership.

Development assistance is an important component of international efforts aimed at promoting peace and avoiding conflict on the African continent. This area holds the key to the preventive potential of the socio-economic and humanitarian sector of the United Nations. The operational programmes and funds of the Organization can play a significant role in monitoring and analysing the structural risk factors for the emergence of conflicts in Africa. Their agendas should include such objectives as more equitable distribution of resources, elimination of discrimination and inequality among certain groups and more effective administration of justice.

We need to strive for the effective implementation of comprehensive United Nations programmes in Africa, combining, on the one hand, demining, measures to eliminate small arms and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and, on the other, the strengthening of democratic institutions, support for socio-economic reforms, the strengthening of national management institutions and strengthening the rule of law.

At the post-conflict reconstruction stage in African countries, it is most important to focus on avoiding the re-emergence of crises, mainly by providing for an effective link of emergency assistance with appropriate measures to support long-term sustainable development and social integration of the most vulnerable population groups. In addition, it is necessary to prepare and implement special measures to eradicate poverty, including initiatives aimed at reducing foreign debt, improving market access and increasing the amount of official assistance for development purposes, increasing direct foreign investment and the transfer of technology.

An important task is to strengthen the fight against HIV/AIDS and other dangerous infectious diseases on both the national and international levels. Along with maximum effectiveness of these efforts, it is necessary to strive for greater agreement among all participants, including within the United Nations system, national bodies, the Bretton Woods institutions, bilateral donors and regional and non-governmental organizations. We support the proposal to establish a special consultative group on the problems of countries that have experienced conflict and are ready to consider with great attention the current proposals of the Secretary-General.

The Russian Federation respects its traditional friendly ties with Africa and is taking consistent steps to orient its foreign policy towards Africa. In addition to our activities within the United Nations, we are working on various ways of expanding our practical participation in the strengthening of Africa's peace-building potential, primarily through such areas as transport, technical assistance for humanitarian work and the training of rescue and peacekeeping workers.

Understanding the concern of many African countries about the problem of unexploded mines, we are to render expert demining services. Moreover, we believe that we must comprehensively expand and develop our positive experience of multilateral cooperation with the African continent and are open to any proposals for joint projects that could make use of Russia's technical and intellectual potential.

We are striving to assist African countries in resolving the most topical problems in the sphere of development: alleviating the debt burden, preparing national cadres and improving access of African goods to the world markets. We are convinced that the way to stabilize the situation in Africa, settle the ongoing and avert future conflicts, and strengthen democracy in African countries is through the continent's integration into the world economy. For our part, we intend actively to participate in such work.

Mr. Zainuddin (Malaysia): My delegation is most grateful for the opportunity to deliberate on an issue of vital importance to the international community as a whole.

My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's progress report, as contained in document A/56/371. The report has outlined specific follow-up action that has been initiated or completed in the areas of peace and security. It also contains a broad overview of recent developments in the areas of governance and sustainable development and of how the organizations of the United Nations system have responded in the implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations made three year ago in 1999. My delegation also commends the comprehensive report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group, which contains valuable suggestions for further action and measures to speed up the implementation of the recommendations. The report reaffirms that the implementation of the recommendations constitutes a priority that must remain high on the agendas of the United Nations system and of Member States. It also reaffirms that the General Assembly, as a chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations, must continue to play the primary role in monitoring the implementation of the recommendations.

It is disheartening to note that Africa continues to be a theatre of wars and a home for poverty and disease, from the scourge of the Ebola fever that ravaged East Africa to the pandemic of HIV/AIDS that has swept across much of the continent. Conflicts, floods and low commodity prices have again held back Africa's economic growth, according to a report released by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The report also indicates that those in conflict suffered negative growth and an alarming deterioration in basic conditions. While growth trends for the region as a whole remain depressed, some African countries are doing well. However, many countries are still vulnerable to conflict and external shocks in the world markets, such as the fallout from the East Asian crisis.

The Secretary-General in his report states that durable peace is a basic requirement for the economic and social progress of Africa. While recognizing the obvious interrelationship between peace and development, as fully described in the report of the Secretary-General, my delegation wishes to re-emphasize that there cannot be peace without development. It is an undeniable fact that economic and social problems are among the root causes of conflicts in Africa. The persistence of poverty impedes efforts for long-term peace and security. According to the latest data, some 300 million Africans live on barely 65 cents a day. Reducing poverty continues to be the biggest challenge for Africa and the mobilization of external resources is therefore urgent. Africa's ability to rise out of chronic poverty can be attained only with continued international assistance, without which many will remain entangled in the vicious cycle of poverty and violence. We concur with the Secretary-General that Africa will continue to rely on a strong and committed international partnership.

Of equal importance is the need to reduce Africa's debt burden, the greatest threat to Africa's survival, to more manageable levels, as many African countries are unable to meet their external debt-servicing obligations. The World Economic and Social Survey 2001 states that Africa owes the international community a total of $305.4 billion. The debt burdens of many African countries remain a pervasive obstacle to their capacity to reduce poverty and reach other development goals. My delegation is dismayed that the debt reduction packages of $34 billion for 19 countries in Africa announced by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have been lethargic in their implementation. We join the Secretary-General in urging creditor countries to consider converting into

grants all the remaining bilateral debts of the poorest African countries. We also urge the international financial institutions to ease significantly and quicken access to facilities for heavily indebted poor countries and to provide countries with sufficient resources. This is critical if Africa is to progress in the long term.

One of the contributing elements to violent conflict in Africa, as stated by the Secretary-General, is the rapid accumulation, illicit sale and indiscriminate use of small arms. My delegation supports the call of the Secretary-General for countries in the region to stop the proliferation of small arms in Africa. The Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in July this year is a significant step towards the goal of preventing, combating and eradicating such weapons. It is also important that bilateral and subregional security arrangements be strengthened to promote self-restraint in military expenditures and the acquisition of weapons in the region.

My delegation also believes that the issue of the proliferation of small arms must be viewed from a holistic perspective of arms control and disarmament, post-conflict peace-building, conflict prevention and socio-economic development. Adequate resources must be provided to ensure that the implementation of practical disarmament measures, including weapons collection projects and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in Africa, are not hampered.

Efforts in post-conflict peace-building are also vital for ensuring sustainable and durable peace. A comprehensive and coherent response is needed to establish the preconditions for reconstruction and development. The Peace-building Support Offices established in the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia could play an important role in post-conflict efforts for reintegration and reconciliation and in promoting a culture of peace. In carrying out those efforts, attention should be given to facilitating and encouraging gender mainstreaming and the participation of women, because, apart from being the most vulnerable and most affected group in conflict situations, they can play a very constructive and effective role in peace negotiations and post-conflict nation-building.

Creating a positive environment for investment and economic growth is important for achieving sustainable development in Africa. In that regard, my delegation concurs with the Secretary-General that investment in Africa, both domestic and foreign, needs to be substantially increased if the region is to accelerate growth to the level of 7 to 8 per cent, which is required in order to reduce poverty by half by 2015. While we recognize that political stability is a crucial factor in attracting foreign direct investment, it is disappointing to note that foreign direct investment inflows into Africa declined from $10.5 billion in 1999 to $9.1 billion in 2000. Such a situation, coupled with the consistent decline in the volume of official development assistance to developing countries will make it impossible for Africa to embark upon serious development programmes.

The *World Economic and Social Survey 2001* illustrated that official development assistance fell from $56.4 billion in 1999 to $53.1 billion in 2000, a decline of 6 per cent in nominal terms. Africa will be further marginalized if the current trends remain unchanged. We therefore urge developed countries to continue assisting African countries in a more sustained fashion in order to bring about growth and economic prosperity for a better future in the region. Equally important is the need to improve access for all goods from African countries to international markets through the reduction and elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers by the international community.

Last year our leaders pledged at the Millennium Summit to give special attention to meeting the special needs of Africa. They agreed to support the consolidation of democracy and to assist Africa in its struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development. The international community must continue to assist African countries in their development needs. It is our earnest hope that the upcoming International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, in March next year, will give particular attention to the special needs of Africa.

Malaysia greatly values its traditional friendly ties with Africa and will continue to actively participate in discussions on Africa. Malaysia, for its part, has been able to make a modest contribution through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme, launched in 1981. To date, many participants from African countries have undergone

various short- and medium-term courses in Malaysia in the public administration and technical fields. We hope that such technical assistance has contributed to enhancing administrative capacity in some African countries, which is critical for enabling them to manage their own development. With that in mind, Malaysia remains committed to continuing to assist Africa through this Programme.

Malaysia has also developed economic relations with some African countries based on the concept of smart partnership, which involves Governments and the private sector, with the goal of promoting sound and sustainable economic activities to ensure a win-win relationship for all. Within our limited capabilities, Malaysia looks forward to further consolidating our cooperation and solidarity with Africa, in the spirit of South-South cooperation.

In conclusion, my delegation urges the international community, particularly the developed countries, to do more for Africa. We must work together with renewed vigour and in the spirit of partnership to rebuild Africa as a continent of promise and potential, one unified by peace, cooperation, economic progress and the rule of law. For their part, African countries must manifest the necessary political will to overcome their problems and to put the interests of their peoples first if they are to realize their vast potential. We welcome the commitment made by the African heads of State and Government to strengthen mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution, and to promote good governance and democracy by developing clear standards of accountability, transparency and participatory governance at the national and subnational levels.

Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone): At the outset, let me, like those speakers who have preceded me, thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report contained in document A/56/371, detailing the progress of the implementation of the recommendations on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. My delegation is also appreciative of the efforts of the Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group, Ambassador Shamshad Ahmad of Pakistan and Ambassador Inocencio Arias of Spain. Their dedication and positive outlook culminated in the effective production of the Working Group's report.

The report of the Ad Hoc Working Group has provided us with an overview of the efforts made in implementing the recommendations on averting conflicts in general and on securing durable peace and sustainable development in post-conflict situations. It also provides us with a summary of major constraints or obstacles impeding the implementation of the Group's recommendations.

It is indeed sad to note that there are currently 17 ongoing conflicts in Africa, all varying in degree of violence and urgently needing resolution and management. Most of those conflict situations mirror long-festering ethnic, religious or linguistic differences, socio-economic inequalities, the oppression of minorities and the suppression of human rights. All of them have been aggravated by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, especially in the subregion of West Africa, and particularly in Sierra Leone, where the conflict was pursued with cynical abandon by external forces in defiance of calls made by the international community as well as by regional and subregional organizations regarding the need to urgently devise ways and means for the solution and management of the situation.

The establishment by the Secretary-General of an Inter-Agency Task Force for West Africa and the dispatch of a Mission to the region in March this year are great strides on the part of the United Nations to develop a real approach to conflict prevention and durable peace, provided that certain stakeholders in our subregion display a high degree of honesty and sincerity of purpose in their commitment to making peace prevail there. But when problems such as continuous illicit arms flows, rampant illegal exploitation of strategic natural resources and nefarious terrorist activities work against these efforts, it leaves my delegation wondering what is to be done next and how soon.

The channels to achieve durable peace and sustainable development in Africa have been firmly put in place by our respective leaders. Meeting this year at the thirty-seventh Organization of African Unity Summit in Lusaka, Zambia, they reverently mapped out a bold new approach for decisive African cooperation in a plethora of areas, including conflict prevention, management and resolution, security and interregional cooperation, good governance and democracy. The New African Initiative, now fondly called the New Partnership for Africa's Development, recognizes that

the links between peace, good governance and democracy are the basic attributes or the preconditions required for sustainable development to progress. Indeed, we are all aware that durable peace in any situation is a basic requirement for genuine economic and social progress.

My delegation takes note of the fact the Africa is the most technologically disadvantaged region in the world. Our situation has not been helped by years of wanton devastation and destruction in wars and civil strife. It is therefore imperative for us to focus on the two thematic areas of concentration in the Ad Hoc Working Group's report: conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building, and education. We wholeheartedly support the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report, especially regarding the establishment of support structures which would institute measures aimed at helping the population achieve self-reliance in the long run. The promotion of a culture of peace within our respective regions remains the best option for social cohesion and national reconciliation. It is against this background that my delegation would like the international community to place a greater premium on such measures so that our regions might live free from the scourge of war.

My country hosts the largest peacekeeping force ever assembled in the history of the United Nations, and I can safely state that through this action the international community remains dedicated to the pursuit of peace in Africa despite the many hiccups which have beset it in accomplishing its many goals. My delegation, as well as the Government and the people of Sierra Leone, wishes to take this opportunity to salute the peacekeepers of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone for their selfless sacrifice to save my country from slipping into oblivion. Peacekeeping remains a most desirable objective, as has been seen in the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Its principles must be supported whatever the cost. We support the call for capacity-building in the sphere of peacekeeping operations, and we also share the view that the development of better practices in different aspects of peacekeeping will enhance the attainment of this objective.

The ever-pervasive issues of poverty and the debt burden, with their corresponding attributes, continue to plague Africa's economic development. Post-conflict readjustment in African societies remains a nightmare for the Governments concerned and their people. Therefore, the current fall in official development assistance and foreign direct investment have not in any case helped the restructuring of the global economic order. We therefore appeal to the international community to live up to its commitment in assisting the developing world in taking strides.

Mr. Maquieira (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is participating in this important debate on Africa, which gives us the opportunity us to comment on the work and recommendations of the General Assembly's group of experts.

Allow me to congratulate the Working Group, which has been entrusted with overseeing the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. That work has been led very effectively by Ambassadors Shamshad Ahmad of Pakistan and Inocencio Arias of Spain, who acted as facilitators.

Solid and durable peace in Africa is certainly one of the international community's most urgent objectives today. An African continent that is economically stable and invests in the development of its peoples is the greatest contribution to the fulfilment of that aspiration that the United Nations system as a whole can make. That would benefit not only Africa but the international community as a whole. That is why assistance to Africa is assistance to the international community itself.

Chile has always been firmly dedicated to finding solutions and initiatives to promote the interests of the African continent, first at the beginning of the decolonization process and later in the organs created for that purpose by the United Nations.

During its time as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, my country attached particular importance to the situation in Africa, particularly in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone, making proposals and promoting initiatives and draft resolutions. Chile's contribution to the Special Court for Sierra Leone should also be mentioned.

Certainly, the problems afflicting Africa should not be discussed in the Security Council alone. Thus, I wish to reiterate the need to strengthen a general and

integrated focus on Africa, an approach that the Secretary-General and the Working Group have promoted.

We also recognize and support the actions and initiatives of African Governments themselves to prevent conflict, promote respect for human rights, consolidate democratic institutions and ensure good governance and the rule of law.

Today, poverty and its consequences are the main factor in most of the armed conflicts in the African continent. Four out of every 10 of the inhabitants live in conditions of absolute poverty, and everything indicates that this number will increase. To take an example, and quoting from the report on human development in sub-Saharan Africa, half of the people live below the poverty line, on less than $1 a day. Additional efforts are therefore needed to reform this trend to impoverishment of the continent. This will only be possible with a constant and sustained increase in gross domestic product. The external debt of the continent, reaching some $350 billion in 1998 figures, is an excessive burden for economies seriously affected by long-standing armed conflicts, displaced populations and the scourge of HIV/AIDS. We therefore believe it is important for us to speed up and broaden the implementation of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative in order to alleviate the weight of external debt on these African countries.

We also endorse the programme of action adopted at the third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Brussels last May. Along with a message of hope, we need to provide Africa with the benefits of free trade and globalization. The African countries need from the international community a progressive alliance that will enable them to resolve their problems. We call for the granting of the agreed levels of official development assistance, which is a tool that the countries of the continent must have if they are to be able to create the institutions and machinery they need in order to enter the world economy.

Document A/55/45, submitted by the Working Group to the General Assembly, is a report on the activities and proposals focusing on what I believe to be priority issues for promoting the reconstruction of the African continent. These are education and the prevention of conflicts and also post-conflict peace-building.

The report provides a panorama of progress achieved in implementing the Secretary-General's recommendations and the existing obstacles to their full implementation. It suggests actions that will be required to speed up this implementation, including continuing monitoring and follow-up, as has been done by the international community so far.

The Group's report recognizes efforts on the part of the United Nations system and international financial bodies, the international community and African States themselves, aimed at investment and training human resources, in accordance with the guidelines set by the Secretary-General.

Despite these efforts, however, achievements are still modest if you compare them with the magnitude of the challenge. Low enrolment in schools and the deterioration of the quality of education, among other factors, affect economic growth and sustainable development in the African countries. The challenge now is to reverse this trend, and this is where the international community and the United Nations can provide support.

The pandemic of AIDS and related diseases have devastated the continent through millions of deaths, orphan children, despair and poverty. Many who have been fortunate enough to survive have opted to leave their countries for safer continents. In negotiating the agreement on HIV/AIDS last June, the international community focused particular attention on Africa. Both the Rio Group and Chile understand the urgency in combating this scourge in this region. We need to have proper conditions so as to benefit Africa primarily, focusing on prevention, education and using available resources. No less important, there needs to be access to medication. The recent trade agreement is an important step forward in this regard. We need to show firm support for Africa in its efforts to combat HIV/AIDS.

In conflict prevention and peacekeeping, the United Nations plays an important role on the continent. My country also recognizes the role of subregional organizations in Africa. We need to help those organizations carry out their work. My country shares the concern regarding the humanitarian situation in areas that are still under conflict. Chile believes that we need to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and appreciates the work of international aid organizations. In dealing with regional

conflicts our position is guided by the principles of respect for international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes. We would highlight the important role to be played by mediation in regional conflicts.

My country welcomes the report submitted by the Working Group, which provides us with the core elements of the difficult situation in Africa and with suggestions for implementing the recommendations of the Secretary-General. It indicates the road to take, and that road will be a long one, and stresses that the United Nations has the main role to play in the development of the African region.

Mr. Motomura (Japan): In addressing the issues of conflict prevention and economic development in Africa, the importance of the activities carried out by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) cannot be overstated.

Today I would like to touch upon two issues, namely, the OAU and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), both of which play extremely important roles in conflict prevention and economic development in Africa.

Japan welcomes the decisions and declarations to establish the African Union adopted at the thirty-seventh regular session of the summit of the Heads of State and Government, held in Lusaka, Zambia, in July this year.

It is expected that, by integrating the African continent politically and economically, the African Union will advance the cause of peace and prosperity. It envisages the establishment of a pan-African parliament, a central bank, a monetary fund, an investment bank and a court of justice. It will, however, retain certain elements of the OAU, with a conference of Heads of State as the top decision-making body and the foreign ministers forming an executive council.

With these complicated and extensive tasks ahead, it is obvious that the African Union will need greater cooperation and support from the international community; support from the developed world is especially essential.

My Government recognizes the important role played by the OAU's Comprehensive Framework of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in the advancement of peace on the continent, and, thus, has been supporting the OAU Peace Fund. Japan's assistance has been utilized, in part, for the establishment of a situation room in the conflict management centre, as well as for the various OAU field missions for conflict prevention. We remain committed to supporting the OAU's efforts in the pursuit of peace.

There is another dimension in which Japan is facilitating African initiatives. The so-called Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process that Japan has been promoting since 1993 is contributing greatly to development and conflict prevention in Africa, while also supporting the OAU's comprehensive framework. Moreover, the participation of several Asian countries in the TICAD process is broadening the basis of support for African development and is promoting South-South cooperation between Africa and Asia.

My Government welcomes the adoption of NEPAD at the OAU Summit in Zambia in July this year. NEPAD has become one of the major items on the TICAD agenda. The preparatory meeting for the TICAD Ministerial Meeting, held in Dakar on 30 and 31 October this year, adopted many elements contained in NEPAD. I wish to take this opportunity, on behalf of my Government, to express sincere appreciation to the Government of Senegal for hosting the preparatory meeting and to welcome the adoption of the Chairman's summary report, which was subsequently endorsed at the Ministerial Meeting and has become a baseline document for discussion.

The TICAD Ministerial-level Meeting was held in Tokyo on 3 and 4 December. I am pleased to announce today that the Meeting adopted the Chair's statement of the TICAD Ministerial-level Meeting. In addition to welcoming the adoption of NEPAD, the Chair's statement referred to three issues on which NEPAD had placed particular emphasis: first, strengthening the foundation of development through the promotion of peace and good governance; secondly, investing in people through a focus on human resource development and the education and health sectors; and thirdly, reducing poverty through economic growth. In addition, South-South cooperation — particularly between Asia and Africa — regional cooperation and information and communications technology were recognized as important approaches to take in promoting African development.

The Ministerial-level Meeting also provided a useful opportunity to engage in dialogue with representatives of the private sector and civil society, and there was general acknowledgement that the private sector could be an important force behind sustainable development in Africa in the decades to come.

Finally, the Ministerial Meeting also decided that the Third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD III) would be held in the latter half of 2003.

Japan will continue to contribute to tackling the immense problems confronting the African continent. The announcement that TICAD III will be held in the latter half of 2003 is just the latest testimony of my Government's enduring commitment to Africa.

Mr. Akinsanya (Nigeria): I am pleased to participate in the debate on agenda item 48, on causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, and to commend the Secretary-General for his report, which spells out his efforts in the past year in resolving various conflict situations in Africa. Let me also express our appreciation for the report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group.

My delegation believes that most conflict-prevention measures today are large scale and involve expensive civilian and military crisis-management operations normally undertaken after the outbreak of violent conflicts. In the face of limited financial and human resources, the focus should be conflict-prevention measures. There is need therefore to develop a culture of prevention through preventive investment, instead of intervention in conflicts after many lives have been lost and property destroyed.

The Nigerian delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's use of the mechanism of special envoys and representatives, who have worked closely with regional and subregional leaders and organizations to address ongoing conflicts with positive results in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ethiopia and Eritrea. We believe that the Secretary-General should be encouraged to stimulate, through more innovative mechanisms such as the establishment of ad hoc informal arrangements, ongoing discussions on conflict prevention. We trust that such discussions will also involve all stakeholders, including civil society.

Another innovation in the Secretary-General's report is the establishment of an inter-agency Task Force on the West African subregion, which has already visited the subregion. My delegation considers this initiative a welcome development in mobilizing the various United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes to address Africa's multifaceted problems. We urge the Secretary-General to continue to dispatch similar inter-agency task forces to other subregions as the need arises.

My delegation is convinced that the presence of United Nations offices in other countries in Africa, such as Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, the Central African Republic and Liberia, will enhance the United Nations role and will contribute to promoting peace and national reconciliation.

The role of regional and subregional organizations in complementing the work of the Security Council on issues of peace and security is self-evident. In this context the Organization of African Unity (OAU), through its central organ for conflict prevention, management and resolution, has been active in mediating conflicts as well as in serving as an early-warning mechanism on potential conflicts. In West Africa, the Protocol on the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, adopted by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1999, has provided for the creation of several organs, including the Mediation and Security Council and the Council of Elders, as well as a department in the Secretariat charged with the responsibility for peace and security issues. Support of the international community for these regional arrangements would enhance their capacity for conflict prevention and peace-building.

A major cause of political instability and a source of intra- and inter-State conflicts in Africa is the prevalence of small and light weapons in conflict areas. It has been Nigeria's considered view that the restriction of access to these arms and weapons would advance the cause of peace; hence Nigeria's active participation in the recently concluded United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We believe that the effective implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference would aid progress towards that goal. Such support would be in line with the various subregional initiatives adopted on the subject,

including the ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons, which has just been extended for another three-year period. We appreciate the United Nations close collaboration with ECOWAS through the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development and its implementation.

As the Secretary-General has clearly indicated in his report, the capacity of African countries to address the challenges of socio-economic development, peace and security will be enhanced only if there is urgent mobilization of resources — domestic and international — for Africa's development. At present, African countries are ill-placed to mobilize due to a number of factors, including the heavy external debt burden, lack of access to markets of the industrialized countries for their products, and weak institutional capacities. We believe that a situation in which between 20 per cent and 60 per cent of export earnings are expended on servicing external debt, as indicated in the report of the Inter-Agency Mission, is not one conducive to economic growth and sustainable development.

It is against this background that the last OAU Summit in Lusaka adopted a new development strategy, known as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), to promote and sustain Africa's development. As a new initiative based on African realities, NEPAD represents a commitment to strengthen conflict prevention, management and resolution, promote and protect democratic governance and develop standards of accountability and transparency in governance. It also presents the international community with a challenge, as well as with an opportunity to join in the regeneration of Africa through the new initiative.

The commitment to address Africa's conflicts and ensure sustainable development in a manner that will integrate Africa with the rest of the world is undeniable. In the same vein, we are appreciative of the prompt endorsement of the initiative by the countries of the Group of 8 and the European Union. What we now expect is the translation of that commitment into concrete action and measures to implement the programme.

The Acting President: In accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 73rd plenary meeting, held on 3 December 2001, I now call on the observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Martino (Holy See) (*spoke in French*): Steeped in problems, the African continent is prey to many conflicts within and between States. In his 1998 report (A/52/871), the Secretary-General described the causes of conflict in Africa. In many African countries the lives of innocent civilians — millions of men, women and children — continue to this day to be threatened by armed conflicts. Some of these conflicts are barely mentioned in the global arena at a time when international actors are mobilizing elsewhere in the world to end violence and establish peace.

Africa is in urgent need of peace. It needs the determined support of the international community, not only to put an end to current wars but also to fight the underlying causes of conflict in order to bring lasting peace to the continent. As stated in the Ministerial Declaration on the role of the United Nations in support of the efforts of African countries, it is important to assist Africans

> "in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development, thereby bringing Africa into the mainstream of the world economy". (*See A/56/3, chap. III, para. 29*)

Pope Paul VI showed prophetic insight by saying more than 30 years ago that development was the new name for peace. And as Pope John-Paul II recalled in his message for the World Day for Peace in 2000,

> "There is no true peace without fairness, truth, justice and solidarity. Failure awaits every plan which would separate two indivisible and interdependent rights: the right to peace and the right to an integral development born of solidarity."

In other words, there can be no lasting peace without development or development without lasting peace.

Moreover, there can be no doubt that the conditions necessary to promote peace and sustainable development cannot come about without the establishment of participatory democracy enabling the peoples of Africa to craft their own future. Specifically, it is necessary to promote good governance and respect for universal, indivisible basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, as is required in a State based on the rule of law, and as demanded by the inalienable

dignity of the human being: those elements form its foundation.

Africa thirsts for peace and seeks reconciliation among its constituent elements at the local, national, regional and continent-wide levels. Efforts to promote African development should also encompass a concern to repair damaged social relationships, to restore trust on all sides and to provide the joy of peaceful coexistence and mutual acceptance. Here, religious communities continue to play a key role in raising awareness and in promoting reconciliation and forgiveness, without which there can be no lasting peace.

The world has seen too much violence and conflict, whose roots lie in economic inequality and despair. The Holy See has many times stated its views on this subject, notably in two of its most important social encyclicals: *Populorum Progressio* and *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*. In the latter document, His Holiness Pope John Paul II wrote:

> "In fact, if the social question has acquired a worldwide dimension, this is because the demand for justice can only be satisfied on that level. To ignore this demand could encourage the temptation among the victims of injustice to respond with violence, as happens at the origin of many wars. Peoples excluded from the fair distribution of the goods originally destined for all could ask themselves: why not respond with violence to those who first treat us with violence?"

Another crucial problem that continues to hang over the future of the peoples of Africa is undoubtedly the international debt of the continent's countries. In the preparations for the year-2000 Jubilee, the Holy Father emphasized that one of the necessary conditions for that preparation was:

> "a commitment to justice and peace in a world like ours, marked by so many conflicts and intolerable social and economic inequalities".

In the same vein, he called upon people to:

> "give thought, among other things, to reducing substantially, if not cancelling outright, the international debt which seriously threatens the future of many nations".

In a climate where the key word has become globalization, and in which there is a real risk that the least productive will be marginalized and excluded, Pope John Paul II has repeatedly reminded the world of the urgent duty to stand in solidarity with the poor. He is pleased that the United Nations has chosen to appeal for solidarity with Africa through its important initiative, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, which has brought Africa out of oblivion by drawing the attention of Governments, both African and non-African, to the economic, social and political challenges of the continent.

In taking stock of the progress made in this area, the Pope was pleased to note the efforts made by the legislatures of creditor States that have voted for a substantial reduction of the bilateral debt, which was putting a strain on the poorest and most indebted countries. The Pope expressed the wish that the Governments would rapidly finalize these parliamentary decisions. Moreover, he was concerned about the question of the multilateral debt of the poorest countries to the international financial institutions and hoped that the member States of these organizations, especially those with more decision-making authority, would manage to find the necessary consensus to reach a rapid solution to a question on which the development process in so many countries depends, and that has severe consequences for the economic and living situation of many people.

While welcoming the new initiative of the international financial institutions, consisting of the drawing up of strategies to fight poverty, with the participation of, among others, the Governments and civil society of the countries concerned, we consider it urgent that appropriate measures be taken to guarantee solid cooperation between the Governments and civil society, as well as the broad participation of the latter, so as not to stifle the voices of millions of poor and impoverished people whose living conditions the United Nations wishes to improve.

In particular, it needs to be ensured that money coming from debt reduction is invested in those sectors, such as health and education, that affect the lives of the poor. Religious communities, through their presence among the marginalized, are the first line of defence for the wretched. They can ensure, especially in Africa, that what is meant for the poor will indeed reach them in the context of a movement of solidarity.

Moreover, the conditions of access to this programme should be more flexible, and the number of countries that could benefit from this initiative should be increased, taking into account in particular those countries suffering from war.

In this context, how can we ignore the resounding appeal of the Pope, who, at the beginning of this new millennium, said,

> "How can it be that even today there are still people dying of hunger? Condemned to illiteracy? Lacking the most basic medical care? Without a roof over their heads?
>
> "The scenario of poverty can extend indefinitely, in addition to its traditional forms we think of its newer patterns. These latter often affect financially affluent sectors and groups which are nevertheless threatened by despair at the lack of meaning in their lives, by drug addiction, by fear of abandonment in old age or sickness, by marginalization or social discrimination." (*Apostolic Letter Novo Millennio Inuente, 50*)

In view of this situation, the Holy See urgently appeals for new solidarity with the impoverished and marginalized in the world, especially in Africa, and expresses the wish that special attention will be accorded to the new African initiative for development and that the necessary resources will be mobilized to support the efforts of African countries in constructing a better future for the continent, which will only contribute to the emergence of a better world with justice and peace for all.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/56/L.28, as orally revised.

Before we do so, I shall read out the list of additional sponsors: Algeria, Angola, Austria, Belgium, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Ireland, Italy, Kuwait, Lesotho, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Portugal, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, the Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Togo, Tunisia, the United Kingdom, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.28, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/56/L.28 was adopted (resolution 56/37).

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Yussuf (United Republic of Tanzania): I would like to take this opportunity to extend, on behalf of the African Group, my delegation's sincere gratitude to all the delegations that spoke on this agenda item. I would also like to take this opportunity to convey my heartfelt thanks to all the delegations that supported the draft resolution, which is very important for the development of Africa.

It is high time that Africa realized the urgent need to put an immediate halt to all the conflicts that continue to ravage the continent. Africa will not attain the economic and social development that it so greatly desires if it continues to escalate existing conflicts. It is only through the attainment of durable peace that sustainable development in Africa can be realized.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of item 48?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Before adjourning the meeting, let me also thank all the people who have made this morning possible: the secretaries, and all of you.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.